



**Creative Wordshops**

Dorian Haarhoff

082 873 6802

dorianhaa@gmail.com

www.dorianhaarhoff.com

storyteller facilitator speaker writing-coach poet

## Writing Newsletter

March 2020

re-story, re-  
create and re-  
imagine your life  
and work

this letter in [dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za](http://dorianhaarhoffblog.co.za) courtesy Dominic Haarhoff

In these days of online, see ongoing opportunities and 'what's on'

**12% discount** on all online possibilities

Dear seeker of word and images

### World Concern, Social Distancing and Space

*The One Who Is at Play Everywhere says,  
There is a space in the heart where everything meets.  
Come here if you want to find me.  
Mind, senses, soul, eternity - all are here.  
Are you here?  
Enter the bowl of vastness that is the heart.  
Listen to the song that is always resonating.  
Give yourself to it with total abandon. (Radiance Sutras +-800 A.D)*

This month I've been thinking about how the current time asks me to look anew with awareness at the 21 day Lockdown and the space it opens up. Social distancing can bring self-nearing, self-nurturing while placing us in an inclusive cosmos. There are hidden Alibaba doorways into such treasure space. *Open sesame* insights through writing, journaling, story-telling, Fairy tales, photography and and.... And sitting quietly in our breath and bloodbeat.

(I sent out a special discount message on the Rough Writing Road self-directed journaling course. Valid till Shakespeare's deathday and World Book day, 23 April - see ongoing events.)

Alice Walker (*The Color Purple*) at eight lost the sight of one eye in a shooting accident. Her three-year old daughter, Rebecca, enjoyed a TV program *Big Blue Marble*. 'It begins with a picture of the earth as it appears from the moon. It is bluish... battered-looking, but full of light, with whitish clouds swirling around'. One day she observed 'Mommy, there's a world in your eye.' How do we gaze into space and take the world into our eye?

Here's Alice Walker on meditation:

To my surprise...I felt myself drop into a completely different internal space. A space filled with the purest quiet, the most radiant peacefulness. I started to giggle and then to laugh... meditation took me right back to my favorite place in childhood: gazing out into the landscape, merging with it and disappearing.



(Pic: Dorian and US grandchildren in Rio Frio, Texas State Park enjoying space)

At a recent retreat, participants chose pictures. One person, in response to her picture of a narrow steeple stretching into a blue sky, mentioned how focusing on blue

sky was her way of meditating. The steeple then could symbolise the person sitting upright in this space.

My friend, Igno van Niekerk (*Light on Leadership*) writes how photography gifted him with new eyes, taught him another presence - a reality parallel to the one we inhabit in space-time. Marguerite (Osler) van der Merwe (*Evolution The Art of Walking*) reminds us, 'You are always in relationship

with something greater than yourself '. The Alexander Technique she practices teaches silence... stillness... space.)

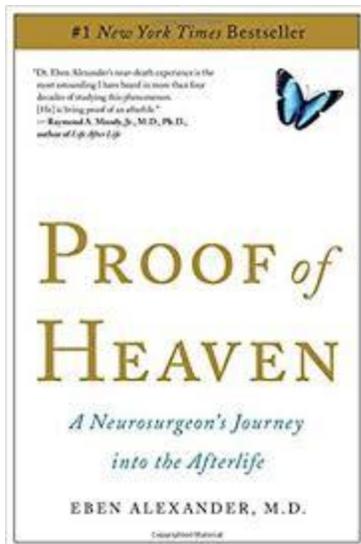
All this resonates with an article, *Noticing Space*, by Ajahn Sumedho. <http://www.budsas.org/ebud/ebmed040.htm>

What we are doing is bringing into awareness the way it is, noticing space and form, emptiness and form; the unconditioned and the conditioned.... we begin to notice the space in this room.... Most people would notice ... the people, the walls, the floor, the shrine, the furniture. But to notice the space, what do you do? You withdraw your attention from the things, and bring your attention just to the space...

Noticing the space around people is a different way of looking at somebody.... When one has a spacious mind, then there is room for everything.... we say 'the space in this room', but actually the room is *in the space*; When the building has gone the space will still be here.

And the space stretches out through the walls into the vast echoing beyond.

Sumedho considers how we can become aware of the space between thoughts and words. This is a way of bringing background (space) forward and placing foreground (people and objects) in relation to that space. It is there though we cannot see it. As you write, notice the gaps between letters and words.



In such a space, we can imagine, then experience, how solid forms take on a subatomic, quantum reality. We and the objects in the room are largely empty space, molecules vibrating, in constant motion. "The rock solid physical world' writes the neurosurgeon, Eben Alexander, in *Proof of Heaven* is 'an infinitesimally...dense configuration of strings of energy.'

Our skins are permeable. We become see through in the nothingness and everythingness. Like Wordsworth 'we see into the life of things.' Lao Tzu writes of the womb that creates this emptiness and fullness.

Here's Adrienne Rich:

The theater of any poem is a collections of decisions about space and time - how are these words to lie on the page, with what pauses, what headlong motion, what phrasing, how can they meet the breath of the someone who comes along to read them?

And here's Russian-Swedish poet, Edith Sodergran, *On Foot I Had to Cross the Solar System*:

On foot  
I had to cross the solar system  
before I found the first thread of my red dress.  
I sense myself already.  
Somewhere in space hangs my heart,  
shaking in the void, from it stream sparks  
into other intemperate hearts.

So then, after sitting in this space for say, 30 minutes, we can return to the other 23.5 hours of the day and night as creatures of time, to the people and objects in the house. I suggest after being in such a space, write in your

journal. Hold the unfolding loss, social media panic, stats and necessary distancing in such a space, such a paradox. Let us be creatures of more than one world. Dual citizens.

*Earth is crammed full of heaven, and every common bush aglow with God.  
Those who see take off their shoes. (Elizabeth Barrett Browning)*

Dorian